

## A Partnership to Bring Freshness to Your Table

Since opening week May 24, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's (KDHE) Office of Health Promotions and the Kansas Department of Commerce (KDOC) have partnered to bring the Capitol Mid-week Farmers' Market to state employees every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The market has increased in size from 5 to 13 vendors (though four of these vendors will not be regular attendees until mid-July due to produce availability). KDOC has developed a campaign to help promote farmers' markets across the state called "Bringing Freshness to Your Table." A local farmers' market is the next best thing to homegrown when the grower has personally planted, picked, and brought the produce to market. But just what does it mean to be "fresh?"



**Gov. Kathleen Sebelius samples a tasty summer salad prepared by the Kansas State Extension Service staff at the June 21 Farmers' Market. Jennifer Church, right in brown shirt, Farmers' Market project coordinator, escorted the Governor on her tour of the market.**

Capitol Farmers' Market growers abide by the following guidelines:

- Most produce is picked within 24 hrs of market day,
- Anything not sold at market is given away or kept by farmer,
- Less perishable items such as potatoes and onions are stored in appropriate dry, cool cellars or basements until needed for market,
- Produce is picked at peak ripeness and is therefore more flavorful.

One of the best things about the farmers' market is establishing relationships with the farmers to learn where food is coming from and under what conditions it has been selected and delivered for sale. Customers should learn to ask the growers about when the produce was picked, how it was stored, and how to use and store it at home.

The mid-week market is an excellent venue for producers to be able to have additional outlets to sell their products. Many times produce will ripen early in the week and then go bad before the producer can get to a Saturday market. The mid-week market allows the grower to provide the freshest fruits and vegetables possible. Most growers sell-out at each market and therefore have no leftover produce

Please come and support your local farmers to help keep our Kansas economy strong while getting the freshest produce available.